A CONSTRUCTIVE APPROACH TO THE STUDY OF SELECTED PLAYS OF GIRISH KARNAD WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO:

YAYATI (1961) TUGHLAQ (1964) HAYAVADANA (1972) BALI: THE SACRIFICE (1980) NAGA-MANDALA (1988) THE FIRE AND THE RAIN (1995)

Synopsis

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The pursuit of knowledge (*Jnan*), wisdom (*Pragya*) and truth (*Satya*) was always considered in Indian thought and philosophy as the highest human goal (Karad). The preceding statement by Karad on the Indian education system helps to distinctly visualize the major essence of education vis-à-vis the objective of developing a complete man. Our scriptures and educational philosophy are laden with core value system but the evidence of various nefarious activities has practically maligned the educated individuals. "The highest education is that which doesn't merely give us information but makes our life in harmony with all existence*".* This statement by our educationist Rabindranath Tagore is probably the most appropriate statement to measure the status of the present-day Indian Education system and revisit it for the sake of the holistic development of an individual.

In the ancient Gurukul system, the teachers or Gurus were responsible for the overall development of the students. Under this system, the time spent in the early formative years of students developed the understanding and social skills and equipped them to perform their duties with adroitness. This system of Indian education not only produced many notable scholars of world repute, but also laid the foundation for research and advancement in learning.

Keeping in view the ideology, philosophy and significance of values in Indian education, the National Education Policy 2020 has laid its comprehensive policies in developing the creative potentials of every individual. Rajeev Ranjan, Principal as well Teacher Trainer in his website (rajeevelt.com) states:

> The policies of NEP 2020 are formulated keeping in mind the principles that the sole purpose of education is not merely developing the cognitive abilities – both the "foundational capacities of literacy & numeracy" and "higher order cognitive capabilities" such as analytical, critical thinking and along with developing the problem-solving abilities – but also moral, social, ethical, psychological, emotional capabilities and dispositions (Ranjan).

It is an established fact that drama can be one of the potent media which can help one to retain his/her indigenous cultural values despite dwelling in the modern world. The question that now arises is what could be the best suitable approach to teach highly complex modern drama to the students of Higher Education so as to help them in retaining the social and cultural ethos of the Indian society. The answer could be figured out in this proposed research, where a new dimension to the studies of modern

Indian drama will be looked into. It is an effort to develop the best suited pedagogical approach that could assist teachers, facilitators and resource persons while teaching drama with the view of maintaining the age-old Indian values with the spirit of modernism.

As we know, drama is considered to be a mode of the portrayal of fictional and non-fictional events through dialogue and performance and it uses various characters, sets, modes and ways to express ideas. According to the research, "Drama is one of those performing arts, which has the power to create an image, and insulate the mind and interconnects it with the body to help visualize the multiple characters portrayed in all their complexities and collective reactions upon the stage" (Diwakar 1). This participating activity stimulates the reader's reactions in such a manner that the co-existing cultural frame into which the characters are cast, conditions his/her thinking. As Annarao and Badiger have stated:

> Essentially speaking, the drama is not new in the Indian context as it has already existed in various forms of folk or *nataka.* Therefore, it has always been an influencing medium for an imitator to present and for the spectator to receive an explanatory image of those physical and spiritual conflicts which govern the human conduct (Annarao and Badiger 130).

Anand Awasthi in his article *Space, Time and Destiny:An Analysis of The Fire and The Rain* has stated, The *Natyashastra* specifies that drama has a pivotal role of integration of the all the three worlds- the physical, the emotional and the spiritual. Abhinav Gupta elaborates it and states that drama should direct one's mind towards the realization of the *Purushartha -dharma, artha, kama and moksh* (Awasthi 1).

Moreover, the potential of this performing art is to develop a congenial link with the audience, to generate immediate responses, and to encourage the viewer. This made it an apt platform to portray the complexities of human life. Therefore, the avant-garde Indian writers expressed democratic and contemporary ideas of the rich Indian culture through drama, which had somewhat lost its meliorism under the British rule. They experienced and registered the social, political, cultural and moral changes that the Indian society was going through and tried to showcase these through creative art.

The revitalization of the drama that evolved in the various regions of India, could be perceived from 1850 up to 1940. This period experienced significant evolution in the styles and techniques of

Indian Theatre. The historical development during the Pre-Independence era in India gave rise to the Modern Indian Theatre. As Ananda Lal remarkably states:

> Many people, even cognoscenti, use the term 'modern' very casually, uncertain about precise application of the term. In consonance with the international consensus on world history and cultural studies, we must admit that neo- modernism reached us during the times of the British Raj in the mid-nineteenth century. It effected sweeping changes in the realm of theatre over the next hundred years, until 1947 and perhaps the subsequent decade, so that the only accurate adjectives for the following fifty years up till now can be postmodern, postcolonial even contemporary (Bhatia).

Ananda Lal acknowledges Krishan Mohan Banerjee's *The Persecuted: or, Dramatic Scenes Illustrative of the Present State of Hindoo Society in Calcutta* (1831) as the first modern play that could depict a social annotation on the orthodox Indian society. In alignment with this, is Michael Madhusudan Dutta's "Is This Called Civilization" (1871) where a strong conflict between Christianity and Bengali culture is depicted. During the Post-Independence era, playwrights like Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941), Sri Aurobindo Ghose (1872-1950), T.P. Iyer Kailasam (1884-1946), Harindranath Chattopadhyaya (1898-1990), and Bharati Sarabhai (1932-1990) made their remarkable presence by depicting strong socio-cultural issues. These writers undoubtedly created a sense of nationalism amongst Indians and also bound them with their ancient beliefs of society which had undergone a paradigm shift due to colonization and development.

The period after 1947 embarked on the second stage in the development of the Modern Indian Drama. It was then, the Indian drama strongly witnessed the acknowledgment of the contemporary issues with the finer aspects of the rich Indian cultural heritage. It took into consideration all the regular instances of the societal and individual issues which were faced by the common men of the nation. It is during this period that Girish Karnad (1938-2019) along with other playwrights such as Habib Tanvir (1923-2009), Mohan Rakesh (1925-1972), Badal Sircar (1925-2011), Dharamvir Bharati (1926-1997), Utpal Dutt (1929-1993), Vijay Tendulkar (1928-2008) and Mahesh Dattani (1958-) gave a new dimension to Indian theatre. The works of these eminent personalities changed the face of Indian drama

forever. Probably, this marked the shift from the British dominated Indian drama to a more nationalized portrayal of contemporary issues.

The style of Indian Drama underwent a complete overhaul from its Pre-Independence state into a different Post-Independent era. In the former phase, the growth of Indian theatre was smooth but it completely represented the essence of the English stage in terms of management, stage setup, style and grace as observed in the works of Sri Aurobindo Ghose, Rabindranath Tagore and T.P. Iyer Kailasam. Gradually, in the latter phase, it perceived an amalgamation of the Indian traditional style and Western techniques to bring about socially relevant themes to the audience.

As Karnad explains in the Introduction of the *Three Plays*:

> My generation was the first to come of age after India became independent of British rule. It therefore had to face a situation in which tensions implicit until then had to come out in the open and demanded to be resolved without apologia or self- justification: tensions between the cultural past of the country and its colonial past, between attractions of Western modes of thought and our own traditions, and finally between the various visions of the future that opened up once the common cause of political freedom was achieved. This is the historical context that gave rise to my plays and those of my contemporaries (Karnad).

Amongst the above-mentioned Post-Independence Indian dramatists, Girish Raghunath Karnad was undoubtedly a notable figure in contemporary Indian Dramatic scene. Karnad is the only playwright amongst his contemporaries who focusses on the ambivalent relationship on the classical and the colonial past and contemporary problems of Indian society (Anoosh.K, Vaishakh.S.K and Prameesh.PP 897). It has been observed that Karnad represented a blend of cultures and traditions in his plays and therefore, his dramatic works were applauded in a better fashion as compared to his contemporaries.

Karnad was born in Matheran in Maharashtra in 1938, where he completed his graduation from Karnataka University, Dharwad. Girish Karnad was awarded Rhodes scholarship upon completion and subsequent he went to England to pursue Master of Arts from Oxford University in Philosophy, Politics and Economics. While in England, he had harnessed keen interest in arts, culture and philosophy. After successfully completing his studies, he returned to India and visited Madras to join Oxford University Press in 1963. Karnad has been a recipient of many awards including the Padma Shri (1974), Padma

Bhushan (1992), Sahitya Akademi Award (1994), and Jnanpith Award (1998). Most of his plays were originally written in Kannada and then translated into English by Karnad himself.

Karnad was exposed to the realm of theatre in the early years of his life. Vanashree in *Three Plays of Girish Karnad* has stated:

> At seven or eight in the evening it felt like midnight. So, we read or told stories, fairy tales, and mythology. Mothers recounted stories. Father exaggerated the machismo. The jungle stretched far into the horizon. Ghosts, spirits, animals from the tales took on a realism that was larger than life. I have never bothered what tale to invent, I dip into my mind, into our culture (Tripathi 9).

The interesting stories being recited to him amidst the frightening darkness of the surrounding jungle, transformed the young Karnad into an imaginative personality where he could portray animals as the main characters of his plays and visualize gods in various forms. His artistic traits as an actor, director, and scholar inclined his visions as a playwright and producer who could organize his personal experiences along with the contemporary issues and develop a drama endowed with rich Indian heritage and the Western styles. He brought into light a newer approach of utilizing historical and mythological elements in order to display the contemporary issues of the society. According to Karnad, "The energy of folk theatre comes from the fact that although it seems to uphold traditional values, it also has the means of questioning those values, of making them literally stand on their heads" (Karnad 14).Therefore, Karnad soon realized that using mythical and historical elements while dealing with contemporary issues could be an apt strategy to capture the imagination of the readers and audiences which would help in inclining their attention towards the emerging issues of the modern times. Anoosh and Vaishakh in their works have remarked that Girish Karnad's works are an epitome of two exemplified qualities which include a continuous and comprehensive experimentation with the dramatic style and an in-depth involvement with the human conditions in its contemporary and universal manifestations (Anoosh.K, Vaishakh.S.K and Prameesh.PP).

Karnad is such a dramatist who firmly believed that literature is concerned with the exploration of both social realities and individual consciousness. So, he implemented his unique dramatic techniques to discover the philosophical, socio-cultural, economic, and religious vision of India. He was determined to revitalize the Indian drama through his particular artistic sensibility and innovative strategies. India

was recovering from the shackles of the British Raj, thereby, building the fractured society and developing the sense of unity and solidarity. Further, the Indian masses were under the influence of various dilemmas, viz., poverty, under-development, discrimination, low standard of living and the problem of leading a less contented life. Therefore, his notion was to fuel the Indian consciousness that became dormant after the British Imperialism.

Girish wanted to establish an unbreakable bond between the inner self and community consciousness as he strongly believed that the lost colour of India could only be regained by bridging this gap. This initiative by Karnad proved fruitful in the Indian context for resolving the tension and conflict with which most Indian minds were going through. Our society was under the havoc of men being selfish, rulers being dismissive and individuals being entangled with the unprecedented chaos encircling their lives. The deliberate efforts by Girish Karnad in reinterpreting the myths according to the current needs of the situations to deal with the insecurities of mind, led all individuals with an effort to balance their points of view towards life. We must also realize how soothing dramas and other plays would have been to society which was striving to stand up. It not only provided a sense of understanding of the problems inflicting the masses, but he also tried to resolve those by citing different similar stages of Indian society in the past.

Karnad always believed that the sole purpose of literature is to uphold the human and cultural values and spread awareness among the readers and viewers. So, he prolifically used his dramatic techniques and styles to deal with these concepts artistically and realistically. He wanted Indian people to get rid of the restraints of narrow mindedness and obsolete beliefs so as to awaken their dormant consciousness to live a meaningful life. He tried his best in representing the enriched Indian cultural heritage through his characterization and themes in his plays. This not only developed the idea of nationalism but also gave hope for development and enhancement of human lives.

Some of the major plays by Karnad are, *Yayati* (1961), *Tughlaq* (1964), *Hayavadana* (1972), *Bali: The Sacrifice* (1980), *NagaMandala* (1988), *Tale-Danda* (1990), *The Fire and the Rain* (1995), *The Dreams of Tipu Sultan* (1997), *Odakalu Bimba* (2005), *Wedding Album* (2006) and *Boiled Beans on Toast* (2014). Amongst these plays, six plays of Karnad are considered to be the most complex ones

because of their multilayered plot structure and excessive use of symbolism along with either mythological or historical contexts.

Yayati is Karnad's first dramatic attempt, which is inspired from the ancient myths of '*Adiparva*' of the *Mahabharata* in the modern context, with an intention to examine the fallacy of human life with all its elemental passions and conflicts. It deals with the internal battles of humans to strive for perfection. "Myths, legends and folktales are in fact the embodiment of cultural ethos and represent the underlying values and principles of life, the shared experience of the race, the rules and the codes of the society. The play has been interpreted in the light of the contemporary concepts" (Vishwakarma 3).

Yayati, the protagonist, is the epitome of the modern man. He is driven by his uncontrolled passions. He completely represents the present-day man, who even though has all pleasures in life still, seeks unethical ways to quench his evil desires. Despite having his wife Devyani, Yayati is attracted towards the beauty of Sharmistha which makes him fall for her. This development infuriates Devyani, in response to which, she narrates the whole incident to her father Shukaracharya. As a result, Shukaracharya curses Yayati with premature ageing as a punishment for his unduly acts of inflicting such pain and suffering upon his daughter. On his father's plea, Pooru, the son of Yayati, accepts his curse and is ready to sacrifice his youth for his father. Yayati, on accepting Pooru's youth, also becomes liable to perform marital responsibilities that come attached with it. Pooru's wife Chitralekha blames Yayati for this curse and with no recourse of enjoying marital bliss with her husband, she swallows a vial of poison and commits suicide. On seeing the corpse of Chitralekha, Yayati realizes his mistake and accepts his old age by embracing Pooru.

Through this play, Karnad has tried to throw some light on existing social issues of the Post-colonial scenario of the Indian society. He has been able to associate the complexities, like, the problems of identity, patriarchy, desire of immortality, man-woman relationship, selfishness and pervasive sense of alienation through his dramatic works. In *Yayati*, Karnad deals with the plight of the present-day man who is lost in the mire of materialism and sensual pleasures of life and, being oblivious of his responsibilities, he often adopts immoral ways to live a contented life. This dramatic work truly serves as a source of reinterpretation of the ancient myth to communicate perplexity of the Post-Colonial society.

Tughlaq, is Karnad's another outstanding play in which he has introduced the elements of political allegory to corelate the contemporary legislative issues of the 1960s with medieval India. Here, he has introduced his readers to the fourteenth-century ruler Mohammad-bin-Tughlaq whose personality is considered to be estranged from the society. His ideation and philosophy of life are far beyond the comprehension of common man. Although, he is religiously tolerant yet all his good deeds for public result in mayhem, horrific killings and terror. Karnad has put in his best efforts to intermix history and fiction in order to present the real essence of the fourteenth century which shares affinity with contemporary India. Through the character of Tughlaq and by using dramatic devices like symbolism, irony and humour, Karnad has revitalized Indian history which somewhat lost its meliorism in the Post-Independence era. As Senthil Kumar has remarkably stated:

> The personality of Tughlaq is profoundly influenced by Socrates, Plato and Zarathustra. Therefore, he is truly an avant-garde Muslim ruler who believes in taking radical decision and implementing them for the upliftment of his nation. His novel policies viz. Hindu-Muslim unity, abolition of Jizia-tax, shifting his capital from Delhi to Daulatabad, introduction of copper currency, equality before law, freedom of expression, impartial justice and segregation of politics from religion represents him a disciple of modernity whose visions are influenced by the ideology of the secularism of Buddha (Kumar 41).

However, despite his great scholarship, intelligence and progressive outlook, Tughlaq's policies miserably failed due to lack of support from others as well as poor implementation. Thus, Karnad imparts an important message to the readers by relating the possibilities of the situation of utter disillusionment amongst the masses as an outcome of seeking power without considering their welfare.

Bali: The Sacrifice, hails its source from the thirteenth century Kannada epic, *Yashodhara Charite* by Janna, which teleports us to experience the ninth century Sanskrit epic by *Yashastilaka* and the eleventh century Sanskrit epic by Vadiraja. Though this play is based on the ancient Kannada epic yet its characters and theme still hold a striking relevance in the present scenario. Here, we find the dramatist raising his voice against some orthodox and blind beliefs, which were still in observance. Though it is a short play of merely four characters, it is successful in uncovering the reasons of void and meaninglessness experienced by them in the play, with which the readers/viewers can easily relate to.

Binod Mishra in his research work has stated, "The story revolves around the myth of *Cock of Dough* which holds its reference to the alibi of myth that lies in offering the goddess fowl in sacrifice to redeem the erring mankind" (Mishra 92). The play completely condemns the animal sacrifice and lays stress on the fact that advocating violence is equally dangerous as the action itself. The thought of being barbarous is as atrocious as the action itself.

Through this drama, Karnad wants to convey that no religion sanctions killing of any life in order to preserve anothers. The element of conventionality and modernity is balanced by Karnad in reflecting the need to bring necessary amendments in our age-long religious practices and superstitions. Karnad in his note on *Bali: The Sacrifice* rightly quotes Professor Bimal Krishna Matilal, who says:

> Great epics, apart from being the source of everything else, constitute an important component of what we may term as moral philosophical thinking of the Indian tradition… professional philosophers of India over the last two thousand years…have very seldom discussed what we call moral philosophy today…. The tradition itself was self-conscious about moral values, moral conflicts and dilemmas, as well as difficulties of what we call practical reason or practical wisdom. This consciousness found its expression in the epic stories and narrative literature (Mishra).

Karnad's next selected play *Hayavadana* acknowledges a remarkable representation of indigenous Indian dramatic attitude. The story of *Hayavadana* is derived partly from the story of Thomas Mann's entitled as 'Transported Heads' which, in turn, is based on one of the versions of the story represented in *Vetal Panchavimshati*. The play remarks the matter of the human identity in the world of entangled relationships. The word "Hayavadana" which literally means "the one with the horse's head," is coined after a horse-headed man who longs to shed his horse's head and reincarnate as a human. The underlying theme of *Hayavadana* represents the theme of philosophic crisis of alienation between mind and body. Commenting on Karnad's *Hayavadana,* Naik observes, "his [Karnad's] technical experiment with an indigenous dramatic form here is a triumph which has opened up fresh lines of fruitful exploration for the Indian English playwright" (M.K.Naik). The play also revolves around the discordance which brews in the thought process of a female character who is so entangled in the shackles of patriarchal system of society. She is unable to choose between her husband or her ideal lover.

Karnad's attempt in *Hayavadana* indicates his bold measures in reinterpreting an old myth by deconstructing and evolving its new connotations which have a relevance in shaping contemporary thinking of individuals. The theme of incompleteness and pursuit for completeness is well represented through the character of Padmini in the play, which can be kept parallel to the problems of modern man.

His craftsmanship as a dramatist is well manifested when he is able to make the best use of myths and folklores, not only to simplify them but also to relate them to the new dimension of modernity. As M.K Naik says, "*Hayavadana* presents the typical existential anguish, but does not stop at the existential despair. Going beyond it, the play suggests a strategy for the achievement of integration in a world inevitably cursed with absurdity and irrationality" (M.K.Naik).

Here, Naik truly supports the work of Karnad in using the elements of past to make it relevant for the understanding of the present contemporary world.

Naga-Mandala, a blend of folktale and myth, is a drama about male supremacy that weakens to shatter the dignity of female entity in the society and rests on the victimization and confinement of women. It is the versatile dramatic art of Karnad through which he has used the device of a story within a story format. He has also aimed at depicting the wisdom of the underestimated sections of Indian society like the uneducated, the rural, and women. Karnad had been firmly opposed the hegemonic notion which states that the attributes like wisdom can come only through books and higher education. The action of the play begins in a ruined temple, "The inner sanctum of a ruined temple. The idol is broken, so the presiding deity of the temple cannot be identified. It is night. Moonlight seeps in through the cracks in the roof and then walls" (Krishna 510).

The illustration of broken idol in the play demonstrates the de-escalating faith of the common man in urban India. The broken idol can be well compared to the condition of a modern man who is besieged with sins and hopes for forgiveness.

Karnad's *Naga-Mandala* not only exposes and attacks the male bigotry and repression of women, but also deflates the concept of chastity. His play resonates with the common notion that a woman is always expected to be devoted to her husband even if he treats her cruelly and is unfaithful to her. It is clear that apart from documenting the female issues, this dramatic work also remarks about the need for a strong protesting voice against the harsh patriarchal notion of the Indian society. This became

relevant since the status of women in society has not undergone the exported shift. Karnad tried to educate the masses about equality through his plays and desired to witness a society without any discrimination, especially based on gender.

The Fire and the Rain is Karnad's another dramatic work that is based on the myth taken from the *Mahabharata* i.e., the myth of Yavakri as well as the myth of Indra-Vritra to connect the stories of the ancient past with contemporary times. Here, Karnad tries to recast the existing myths in order to make it relevant in the modern context. In this play, Karnad principally deals with the themes, like, concepts which illustrates the resentment for power, politics, sexual exploitation, humiliation and isolation of characters. Karnad makes an attempt to reinterpret the past in terms of the present and vice versa. He has been successful in investigating the universality of some basic human emotions and sentiments. The play, *The Fire and the Rain* has the subtle influence of folk tales along with different social customs and traditions. He employs mythical, historical and folk themes as a framework of this play to portray the richness of the ancient past. He also makes an attempt to connect his readers/viewers with the secret domains of human psyche which is considered as a storehouse of contradicting impulses and suppressed anxieties. Dood Peer in his work *The Fire and The Rain* has illustrated:

> This dramatic work qualifies in providing its readers/viewers with a wide range of variations with respect to its characters as observed in - the Brahmin's chanting hymns, the tranquil music of the innocent romance of Nittilai and Arvasu, the rapturous ecstasy and the tragic trend of Yavakri–Vishaka relationship and the catastrophic explosion of Raibhya's revenge" (Peer 19).

The 'Fire' mentioned in the title of the play symbolizes many aspects like- lust, rage, retaliation, envy, betrayal, violence, and death. Similarly, the 'rain' mentioned in the title indicates the self -sacrifice, compassion for one another, the influence of divine grace, sympathy, attributes of forgiveness, and truthfulness.

This play is proliferated with different aspects of psychology that encompasses the disinclination and the hatred of man against man, father against son, wife against husband, upper caste against lower caste people, man against God, freedom against bondage, hatred against affection, fire against rain, passion against truth, and above all, *vidya* against *vidya*. Arindam Ghosh in *Karnad's The Fire and The Rain – An Interplay of Ritual, Pro-Social Myths and Dramatic Realism* has stated:

> The age-long story of Yavakari has been used to bring out the consequences of 'knowledge without wisdom' and of 'power without integrity'. But amidst the interplay of powerful passions and emotions of the mythic characters, the play serves to deconstruct the one-dimensional nature of patriarchal domination and casteism rooted in Indian society (Ghosh 643).

In the light of the afore-mentioned plays, it can be said that Girish Karnad excelled in reinterpreting the Indian mythological themes through the modern lens. Although, he was also under the strong influence of the Western theatre, he has left no stone unturned in depicting the ancient Indian values and their universal social relevance through his plays. All of his plays have remarkably surpassed in determining the importance of the socio-cultural ethos in current times. He may we termed as true representative of modern consciousness in his plays with the blending of Indian cultural heritage and values and his dramatic creations.

Nevertheless, it has always been challenging to teach and explain the themes and plots of Karnad's drama to the readers. It incorporates various dramatic elements, strategies, and techniques that a reader or learner cannot easily comprehend. His plays reflect history, legends, and myths not only keeping in mind the literary purpose but also as a strong medium to depict several contemporary situations at societal and individual levels. Therefore, his plays need a different kind of teaching methodology to fulfill the writer's objective as well as in making the underlying concepts of the plays coherent as well as comprehensible for the readers. His plays are highly complex and multilayered and, therefore, demand a well-qualified pedagogical approach to fuel the critical and analytical powers of the readers.

Constructivism is the finest pedagogical approach that may be adopted in the undergraduate and postgraduate education systems while teaching the multilayered plays of Girish Karnad. This teaching technique deals with the nature of knowledge in the learners. It presents a school of thought which describes how a learner attains, uses and develops the use of the external experience and utilize the same in developing the cognitive processes. This approach is based on the fundamental tenet that learners create knowledge from the interaction between the existing knowledge and the new situations or experiences they encounter. The learners construct from their prior experiences and presuppositions and try to incorporate them in their present learning situations. The approach of constructivism involves an

active meaning process wherein the learners construct their own learning schemes by linking new ideas with their existing knowledge around them. Walsh (1999) cites the writing of Gautama Buddha (560–477 BC): "We are what we think. All that we are arises within our thoughts. With our thoughts we make the world" (Walsh). It implies that individuals construct the world in which they live. Through this, we come to understand that one's environment highly affect the processes of thinking mechanism based upon what is observed or experienced by them in the learning process.

Constructivism implies that learners are encouraged to construct their knowledge instead of copying it from an authority, be it a book or a teacher, in realistic situations instead of decontextualized, formal situations, such as, propagated in traditional textbooks, and together with others instead of on their own (Kanselaar 56).

Von Glaserfield has rightly said, "Constructivism is a theory of learning that states that learning happens when people actively construct their own knowledge". This approach has completely transformed a changing view on learning and instruction from 1985 onwards. This is not a single concept, but incorporates the following three sets of ideas:

a) a set of epistemological beliefs;

b) a set of psychological beliefs about learning and cognition;

c) a set of educational beliefs about pedagogy (e.g., that one should allow the learners to define their own learning objectives; that knowledge emerges from constructive interaction between the teacher and the student or between collaborating students (Kanselaar).

An educator, following the basic idea of constructivism, structures the learning outcomes for the learners by employing various methods, like, posing contradicting questions, presenting new information, asking open ended questions, encouraging the investigation, and engaging learners in meaning-making processes that are designed to challenge the current concepts. These teaching-learning sessions will, in turn, motivate the learners intrinsically and enhance their emotional, social, moral, and cognitive development.

Piaget (1977) has asserted that learning within an individual is a result of meaning-making process that takes place by active construction of meaning, rather than by simply accepting the facts. He further explains that when any learner, encounters an experience or a situation that dismantles his present

way of thinking and thereby generates a state of disequilibrium or imbalance in his mental space. He must then alter the process of thinking to restore equilibrium. In order to integrate the new knowledge into the current one, one must make meaning of the new information by linking it with what the learners already know. If this is not possible, learners must accommodate new material in the traditional style of schematic patterns by reorganising current knowledge to a higher level of thinking.

Therefore, this approach can be the best-suited method in teaching complex plays to the learners. These modern-day dramas portray complex issues of the society which can be best understood and resolved in the minds of the learners through this pedagogical approach.

Here is a brief overview of the previous researches that have been conducted on the plays of Girish Karnad's vis-à-vis The theory of Constructivism.

Vanashree Tripathi in her book entitled *Three Plays of Girish Karnad- A Study in Poetics and Culture* (2004) has discovered a versatile personality of Girish Karnad. She has beautifully written about the mutations and innovations in Karnad's play that could help India in revitalizing its lost colour and temper. She had investigated three plays- *Hayavadana*, *Tale-Dande*, and *The Fire and the Rain* in her book.

David Wright in his research article, *Constructivist Inquiry and Learning in Drama* (2007) has made an attempt to extend his study into a discussion by incorporating drama and learning into one frame. In this article, a conceptual study of Constructivism is described vividly and then evaluated through references from two projects associated with drama. The first project deals with the scripting of cross-cultural performance work and the second research inclines on applied creativity for beginning teachers. This research motivates teachers in using Constructive teaching approach in teaching – learning sessions.

Alan Pritchard and John Wollard in the book entitled *Psychology for the Classroom: Constructivism and Social Learning* (2010) have tried to bring forward the Theory of Social Constructivism and Social Learning Theory to depict as in how the theory of constructivism might be translated into a set of pedagogical approaches and later applied to teaching curriculum to show how the social constructivist pedagogy could be developed into the set of practical strategies and activities for

faculties and resource person to attain their teaching objectives. These scholars have tried to incorporate the social learning theories and approaches of constructivism into the classroom situations.

Mohammad Yusuf Ansari in his research work entitled *Antique Modes and Contemporary Narratives in The Works of Girish Karnad* (2013) analyses how Girish Karnad has used drama as a potent platform to depict the traditional and the contemporary issues. Karnad's endeavour to dramatise legendary myths, folklore, and historical figures is significant because of the sub-plots, he weaves into his plays, which add levels of meaning and elaborate on societal and present themes.

Vishal Dagar and Aarti Yadav in their research article entitled *Constructivism: A Paradigm for Teaching and Learning (*2016) have focused their studies on the current demand and methodologies of adopting Constructivism as a practical approach in teaching and learning process. Their research paper sketches the need to redefine the objectives of education to include more critical and reflective thinking by adopting the approaches of Constructivist Pedagogy.

Shruthi. T. in her research work entitled, *The Growth of Indian Drama from Pre to Post-Independence Era: A Bird View Analysis* (2017) focuses on the evolution of drama from the Pre-Independence era to the Post-Independence era. Her study reveals that Indian drama is a compendium of the Western Intellectual standards and Indian theatrical techniques while depicting the realistic attributes and problems of the deprived and marginalized sections of the society.

Dr.Venkata Ramani Challa, in his research paper entitled, *Deconstruction of Myth in Karnad's Bali: The Sacrifice – A Critical Study* (2018), discusses about *Bali* as an evidence of experimental approach across a saga of myths. He lays stress upon the clash that exists between the two diversified sects of philosophies – one based on spiritual and traditional; other – upholding the rational views. He has carefully examined the themes of self-identity, alienation, infidelity, sin and complexities of human personality in his article.

The literature review reveals that most of the previous researches conducted in the field of Karnad's plays incline towards the identification of the contemporary issues and focus on the evolving paradigms of the Indian drama. The studies that have been conducted hitherto in the field of Constructivism reveal the only fact that this pedagogical approach helps the learners in constructing their newer concepts with the help of their prior experiences.

It is evident that Girish was motivated by Indian mythology and found it relevant after countless centuries. This poses a challenging question to our generation too. We often wonder about the relevance of these age-old myths and their application in new life. We must never forget how Indian society has developed over the ages encompassing numerous problems and their challenges thereon. A subtle respect for history and imbibing their core ideas to walk in the present would strike a balance between both the worlds.

Therefore, this proposed study will add a new dimension to the application of the pedagogical approach of Constructivism on Girish Karnad's selected plays which has not been attempted before. This research work will help in the formulation of the Constructive models for teaching the highly complex plays of Karnad. It is hoped that this study will help the learners or readers in developing their analytical, critical, and reflective skills after studying Karnad's plays from the Constructive teaching model. It will help them critically analyze contemporary issues which the writer has aspired to bring forward through his works and help the learners in gradually developing themselves as the real-life problem solvers.

The objectives of the proposed dissertation will be:

1. To study the basic principles and the range of the Constructive teaching approach;
2. To examine various levels of complexities in the selected plays of Girish Karnad;
3. To determine the methods of Constructive teaching approach that are suitable in teaching the complex plays of Girish Karnad;
4. To develop a Constructive model for teaching the selected plays of Girish Karnad.

Keeping in view, the above-mentioned objectives, the chapter scheme of the thesis is proposed as:

Chapter I: -

Introduction: (a) Basic Principles of Constructive Teaching Approach

(b) An Introduction to Girish Karnad & His Dramatic Techniques

Chapter II: -

Application of Constructive Approach to Karnad's *Yayati and Bali- The Sacrifice*

Chapter III: -

Application of Constructive Approach to Karnad's *Hayavadana and Naga-Mandala*

Chapter IV: -

Application of Constructive Approach to Karnad's *Tughlaq and The Fire and the Rain*

Chapter V:

Conclusion

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